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**Challenge or threat? Understanding the links between optimistic expectations and
emotional responses to marital difficulties**

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and emotional responses to marital difficulties**

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Thomas and Deborah, who have always supported and believed in me. I am so grateful for both of you, and I would not have been able to reach this milestone without your love and inspiration. I would also like to dedicate this work to my soon-to-be husband, Zachary Pavlich, who has continually encouraged me throughout my years of study and through the process of writing this thesis.

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Abstract

Challenge or threat? Understanding the links between optimistic expectations and emotional responses to marital difficulties

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Although popular culture often touts the benefits of optimism for well-being, not all optimistic expectations may be equally adaptive. In light of recent work drawing important distinctions between global, dispositional forms of optimism and more focused, relationship-specific forms of optimism, the current study examined a sample newlywed couples ($N=171$) across three time points to determine whether global and specific optimistic expectations for the future would differentially predict emotional reactivity to and recovery from daily marital conflicts.

Specifically, spouses higher in global optimism were expected to exhibit lower reactivity to and greater recovery from conflict, whereas spouses higher in relationship-specific optimism were expected to exhibit greater reactivity to and reduced recovery from conflict. Newlyweds were recruited during the first six months of their marriage and reported on their levels of global and relationship-specific optimism. Couples then completed a series of daily diary tasks over the early years of their marriage assessing daily marital conflict and daily positive and negative emotions. A series of multilevel models provided minimal evidence for our predictions,

however, suggesting that these two forms of optimism may not be associated with emotional reactivity to and recovery from daily marital conflict. The implications of these non-significant findings are discussed.

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Introduction

Maintaining a long-term, satisfying marriage can be difficult, as no relationship is immune to conflict. Over the course of a marriage, spouses are likely to annoy one another, hurt each other's feelings, let each other down, and argue about everyday life tasks (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003). Fortunately, the mere occurrence of these negative relationship experiences need not be damaging for the relationship; rather, it is how spouses manage their responses to those less than perfect relationships moments that matters for marital well-being (e.g., Gottman, 1994; Overall, Girme, & Simpson, 2016). For instance, couples who are able to maintain and utilize positive affect during conflict situations (e.g., Campbell, Martin, & Ward, 2008; Johnson et al., 2005) and who can effectively "bounce back" from distressing conflict experiences after they occur (Gottman & Levenson, 1999; Salvatore, Kuo, Steele, Simpson, & Collins, 2011) exhibit greater resilience to the adverse effects of relationship difficulties over time.

In trying to understand the factors that may promote versus hinder these adaptive responses to marital conflicts, some scholars have argued for the importance of optimism, or the tendency to expect favorable future outcomes, for healthy relationship functioning. Specifically, optimistic expectations for the future should promote marital well-being by suppressing any doubts about the relationship and inspiring more constructive efforts to overcome relationship difficulties (e.g., Murray & Holmes, 1997; Parise, Donato, Pagani, Schoebi, 2017; Srivastava, McGonigal, Richards, Butler, & Gross, 2006). Indeed, several studies have found that optimists exhibit more cooperative problem-solving behaviors within their relationships, and as a result, experience fewer declines in their relationship quality over time (Assad, Donnellan, & Conger, 2007; Srivastava, et al., 2006). However, other scholars have cautioned that not all optimistic expectations may be so adaptive. At times, such expectations may serve to create a false sense of

security which impedes adaptive coping responses to difficulties (Dillard, Midboe, & Klein, 2009; Radcliffe & Klein, 2002). Supporting this notion, a recent study found that whereas maintaining a generally positive outlook on life predicted constructive behavioral responses to marital conflict, holding highly positive expectations about specific relationship events inhibited these positive behaviors (Neff & Geers, 2013). In other words, although global forms of optimism seemed to represent a relationship asset, more focused relationship-specific forms of optimism seemed to operate as a relationship liability.

In light of this recent work, the current study provides further examination into whether some types of optimistic expectations for the future are more likely than others to encourage healthy responses to marital problems. Rather than examining the links between optimism and behavioral coping, however, this study investigates whether global and specific forms of optimism may be differentially associated with spouses' emotion regulation in the face of marital difficulties. Whereas maintaining globally optimistic views of the future may promote lowered emotional reactivity to and increased emotional recovery from everyday marital conflicts, holding highly optimistic expectations for specific relationship events may undermine these adaptive emotional responses. In this way, global optimism should be more likely to promote emotional resiliency within the marriage compared to relationship-specific optimism.

Global Versus Relationship-Specific Optimistic Expectations

Although popular culture often touts the benefits of optimism for well-being, a burgeoning scientific literature has called this assumption into question by demonstrating that not all forms of optimism operate in similar ways. Within the optimism literature, it has been argued that positive expectations for the future can vary meaningfully in their level of generality, ranging from very global and diffuse beliefs that future successes are likely to highly specific

positive expectations regarding particular events (Armor & Taylor, 1998). Importantly, the effects of optimistic expectations on well-being may depend on the specificity of the expectation in question (Klein & Zajac, 2009; Neff & Geers, 2013).

At one end of the spectrum, global optimism (also sometimes referred to as dispositional optimism), or the tendency for individuals to generally believe they will experience good outcomes and encounter few problems in life (e.g., “I’m always optimistic about my future”; Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 1994), captures a broad, stable orientation toward the future that promotes positive coping responses in a wide variety of life domains (see Carver, Scheier, & Segerstrom, 2010, for review). On the other end of the spectrum, domain-specific, or situational optimism, refers to the more specific belief that an individual will experience good outcomes and encounter few problems in a particular life domain (Armor & Taylor, 1998; Radcliffe & Klein, 2002). Unlike global optimism, domain-specific optimistic expectations seem to inhibit proactive responses to difficulties, and thus are often associated with poor outcomes (Klein & Zajac, 2009; Neff & Geers, 2013). For instance, when faced with health threats, individuals higher in global optimism respond by taking proactive steps to improve their health. However, individuals higher in health-specific-optimism, which captures a belief that one is at low risk for experiencing poor health outcomes, are less likely to seek out additional health information or to modify their health behaviors in response to health threats (Davidson & Prkachin, 1997; Dillard, Midboe, & Klein, 2009; Klein & Steers-Wentzell, 2007; Radcliffe & Klein, 2002). Similarly, within the marital literature it has been shown that individuals higher in global optimism report engaging in more constructive problem-solving behaviors on days of greater marital conflict, exhibit more positive problem-solving behaviors when discussing marital issues with a partner in a lab setting, and experience less decline in marital quality over time. Conversely, individuals higher in

relationship-specific optimism, which refers to the expectation that one is at low risk for experiencing negative relationship events (e.g., “I expect my partner and I will always communicate well”), report engaging in fewer constructive behaviors on high conflict days, exhibit fewer positive behaviors during lab discussions, and experience greater declines in marital quality during the first year of marriage (Neff & Geers, 2013).

To understand why global and specific forms of optimism predict such divergent outcomes, theories of self-regulation (Carver & Scheier, 2011) argue for the importance of considering the role of expectancy confirmation. According to this theory, optimistic expectations for the future may only be adaptive if individuals are able to circumstantiate those expectations with real-life experiences. Essentially, when individuals’ experiences corroborate their optimistic expectations, this expectancy confirmation should serve to reinforce those optimistic beliefs and enhance confidence that desired outcomes are attainable. As a result, spouses whose highly positive expectations are confirmed may be more determined to approach future challenges in a constructive manner, creating a positive cycle that ultimately increases marital quality (e.g., Scheier & Carver, 1993). Instead of validating optimistic beliefs, however, unmet expectations accentuate the gap between expectations and reality, and may undermine spouses’ sense of prediction and control within the relationship (Afifi & Metts, 1998). Consequently, spouses whose relationship experiences frequently fall short of their expectations may question whether desired outcomes are possible, and thus reduce their efforts to maintain the relationship (Knobloch, 2008).

Notably, spouses’ ability to confirm their optimistic expectations should be impacted by the specificity of those expectations. As expectations become more global, they also become relatively more abstract in nature (e.g., Hampson, John, & Goldberg, 1986), which provides

individuals with greater flexibility in determining whether their expectations have been met (Dunning, Meyerowitz, & Holzberg, 1989). In other words, it should be fairly easy to preserve global optimistic expectations, even when confronted with potentially threatening information, due to the relative lack of objective standards for evaluating those beliefs. As a result, individuals higher in global forms of optimism tend to view negative events as challenges rather than threats (e.g., Chang, 1998). Indeed, a wealth of research indicates that global optimists not only rate negative life events as less stressful (Raikkonen, Matthews, Flory, Owens & Gump, 1999), but also exhibit better emotional adjustment both during and after those events (Carver, et al., 2010; Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 2001). Importantly, this resilience may not stem from an invulnerability to the experience of negative emotions when faced with adverse situations; rather, these individuals may be better able to maintain an optimal balance of positive and negative emotions in these situations (cf. Larsen, Hemenover, Norris, & Cacioppo, 2003). Individuals higher in global forms of optimism often maintain greater levels of positive emotions in negative circumstances (Carver et al., 2010), which is essential for promoting proactive coping efforts and facilitating the ability to bounce back from negative experiences (Larson et al, 2003; Tugade & Frederickson, 2004). Thus, when faced with relationship conflicts that may threaten a positive view of the marriage, spouses holding more optimistic global expectations for the future should not only maintain higher levels of positive emotions in the moment, but also exhibit greater emotional recovery in the wake of those conflicts.

Conversely, as expectations become more specific, they tend to become more concrete, and thus are associated with a smaller range of criteria for evaluating success (e.g., Hampson et al., 1986). Put another way, domain-specific optimistic expectations tend to be more clearly verifiable, and thus, are more easily refuted. For example, spouses may find it challenging to

maintain the belief that they will always communicate well with their partner, especially if the couple experiences frequent disagreements that hinder their ability to communicate effectively. Thus, for individuals holding highly optimistic specific expectations, negative events should be viewed as especially threatening and elicit greater distress. Indeed, research has shown that when optimistic expectations are more concrete, individuals experience greater disappointment, frustration, and sadness in the face of problems (Armor & Taylor, 1998; Klein & Steers-Wentzell, 2007; McGraw, Mellers, & Ritov, 2004). Moreover, as a result of this heightened negative affect, individuals higher in specific forms of optimism often respond to problems with defensive or avoidant behaviors that fail to address the problem at hand (Klein & Steers-Wentzell, 2007; Neff & Geers, 2013). Unfortunately, when these tactics are employed, problems are more likely to fester and recovery from the adverse event is typically hindered. For instance, a recent study found that partners who avoid addressing relational conflicts experience lingering effects of the unresolved issue; namely, previous day avoidance predicted greater next day negative affect, greater next day physical symptoms, and higher (i.e., less healthy) next day cortisol levels when compared to having no tension on the previous day (Birditt, Nevitt, & Almeida, 2015). Therefore, individuals higher in relationship-specific optimism were expected to experience greater emotional distress when faced with relationship conflicts, as well as exhibit lowered emotional recovery from those events.

Overview of the Current Study

Prior work has demonstrated that global and relationship-specific optimism are differentially associated with problem-solving behaviors within relationships (Neff & Geers, 2013). The current study builds on this prior work, which focused on behavioral coping, by considering whether each form of optimism also may be associated with differing emotional

responses to everyday marital conflicts. Whereas global optimism was predicted to enhance emotional reactivity to and recovery from daily conflicts, relationship-specific optimism was predicted to hinder adaptive emotion regulation in the face of conflict. As part of a larger study of marital development, newlywed couples provided information regarding their global optimism and their relationship-specific optimism, as well as completed a series of daily diary tasks assessing daily marital conflict and daily positive and negative emotions. Analysis of these data addressed two key questions.

First, do global and specific optimistic expectations differentially predict spouses' emotional reactivity to daily marital conflict? As in prior research, emotional reactivity was defined as the within-person association between daily marital conflict and same-day positive and negative emotions (e.g., Almeida, McGonagle, Cate, Kessler, & Wethington, 2002). Consistent with theorizing suggesting that individuals high in global optimism may not be immune to experiencing negative emotions during times of difficulty, but rather have the ability to maintain positive emotions in the face of adversity (Carver et al., 2010; Tugade & Frederickson, 2004), it was expected that global optimism may moderate same-day positive emotional responses to daily conflict, but not same-day negative emotional responses. In other words, although spouses were expected to report lower levels of positive emotion on days of greater marital conflict, this association was expected to be weaker for spouses higher in global optimism compared to spouses lower in global optimism. However, spouses higher versus lower in global optimism were not expected to differ in the level of negative emotions they reported on high conflict days. Conversely, and in line with research suggesting that holding more focused, specific optimistic expectations may render individuals vulnerable to experiencing distress and disappointment when faced with difficulties (Klein & Steers-Wentzell, 2007), it was expected

that the associations between daily marital conflict and same-day positive and negative emotions would be stronger for those spouses higher in relationship-specific optimism. Namely, spouses higher versus lower in relationship-specific optimism would report lower levels of same-day positive emotions and higher levels of same-day negative emotions on days of greater marital conflict. In this way, relationship-specific optimists should be less resilient than global optimists to negative relationship experiences.

Second, do global and specific optimistic expectations differentially predict spouses' emotional recovery from daily marital conflict? To examine this question, emotional recovery is defined as the within-person association between daily marital conflict and next-day positive and negative emotions (Birditt, et al., 2015). In general, prior research indicates that individuals report better emotional states on days following interpersonal conflict, compared to days following no conflict (Bolger, DeLongis Kessler, & Schilling, 1989). However, each form of optimism was expected to differentially moderate this recovery. Drawing from research suggesting that global optimism predicts more constructive problem-solving approaches to marital problems (Neff & Geers, 2013), spouses higher in this form of optimism should be more effective in reducing or managing any negativity associated with marital conflicts. Thus, it was expected that spouses higher versus lower in global optimism would be more likely to bounce back from marital difficulties, such that these individuals would report higher levels of positive emotions and lower levels of negative emotions on days following greater marital conflict. However, for spouses higher in relationship-specific optimism, who tend to respond to stressful events with greater avoidance behaviors (Klein & Steers-Wentzell, 2007; Neff & Geers, 2013), the harmful effects of conflict were expected to linger (Birditt, et al., 2015). Specifically, spouses who are higher versus lower in relationship-specific optimism should exhibit delayed

recovery from marital conflicts, such that these individuals would report experiencing lower levels of positive emotions and higher levels of negative emotions on days following greater marital conflict.

Finally, all results were anticipated to hold when controlling for self-esteem, neuroticism, and general marital satisfaction, which are three factors often associated with optimism (Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 1994) and/or responses to relationship difficulties (e.g., Almeida et al., 2002; Murray, Griffin, Rose, & Bellavia, 2006).

Method

Participants

Newlywed couples ($N=171$) were recruited for a longitudinal study of marital development by placing advertisements in community newspapers, premarital counseling offices, local wedding vendors, and online websites (e.g., *Facebook*, *The Knot*). Data collection for the study began in January, 2010. All couples met the following eligibility requirements: a) first marriage for each partner b) married less than six months, and c) neither partner had children. As a primary goal of the broader study was to examine issues unrelated to the current paper (i.e., stress spillover in marriage), sample size was determined through a power analysis for detecting these other effects, coupled with funding constraints. The current study utilized data from the 330 spouses who participated in at least one of the daily diary tasks described below.

On average, husbands were 29.1 ($SD = 5.3$) years old and wives were 27.2 ($SD=4.9$) years old. Seventy-seven percent of husbands identified as White, 15.8% as Hispanic/Latino, 2.3% as African American, 1.8% as Asian American, and 3.1% as other. Seventy-five percent of wives identified as White, 15.2% as Hispanic/Latina, 3.5% as African American, 2.3% as Asian American, and 4.0% as other. In terms of the highest educational degree for husbands, 29.2% reported having a high school diploma, 9.4% reported an Associate's/vocational degree, 48%

reported a Bachelor's degree, 9.4% reported a Master's degree and 2.9% reported a PhD, MD, or DDS, etc. (data was missing for 1.1% of husbands). For wives' educational attainment, 17% reported a high school diploma, 8.8% reported an Associate's/vocational degree, 57.3% reported a Bachelor's degree, 15.2% reported a Master's degree, and 1.7% reported a PhD, MD, DDS, etc. Seventy-seven percent of husbands and 68% of wives were employed full time. Fourteen percent of husbands and 13.5% of wives reported they were currently in school full time, while 9.9% of husbands and 12.3% of wives reported they were currently in school part time. The median combined income of couples was approximately \$60,000.

Procedure

Within the first six months of their marriage, spouses completed two tasks relevant to the current study. First, spouses completed a background questionnaire that included assessments of global optimism, relationship-specific optimism, self-esteem, neuroticism, and general marital satisfaction. Couples received \$50 for completing this part of the study. Second, couples were asked to complete a 14-day daily diary task which assessed spouses' positive emotions, negative emotions, and marital conflict each day. Spouses were given the option of completing the diaries online or on paper and were instructed to complete one diary each night before going to bed. This daily diary task was repeated one and two years after the initial assessment; thus, spouses could provide up to 42 days of diary data over the course of the study. Couples were paid \$30 each time they completed a 14-day diary task.¹

Overall, 330 (96%) spouses participated in at least one diary task and 226 (69%) spouses participated in all three diary tasks. A series of multilevel models accounting for dependency between spouses showed that spouses who did not provide any diary data did not differ from the

¹ Prior to completing each diary task, couples attended a lab session in which they engaged in a series of videotaped discussions about personal and marital issues. These discussions are not relevant to the current hypotheses.

rest of the sample in their demographics, global and relationship-specific optimism, or initial general marital satisfaction. Similarly, spouses who participated in all three diary tasks did not differ from those who did not in their demographics or either form of optimism. However, wives who participated in all three diary tasks reported higher initial general marital satisfaction than did husbands who participated in all three diary tasks and both wives and husbands who missed one or more of the diary tasks, $b = 3.16$, $t(320) = 2.03$, $p = .04$, 95% CI [0.11, 6.21]. Most spouses (73%) chose to complete the surveys online. These spouses did not differ from those who completed the surveys on paper in the number of diary days provided. Across all three waves of data collection, spouses provided a total of 11,119 daily surveys (5,521 husbands, 5,598 wives), with each spouse providing an average of 34 days of diary data. As data were examined using multilevel modeling techniques, participants who did not provide all 42 days of data could be included in the proposed analyses. Thus, all results reported are based on data from all spouses who chose to participate in at least one diary task.

Background Questionnaire Measures

Global optimism. As part of the initial background questionnaire, spouses completed the Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R; Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 1994) to assess their level of global, dispositional optimism. Spouses were asked to indicate their agreement with six items (plus four filler items) on a scale ranging from 0 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). To create composite scores, negatively worded items (e.g., “If something can go wrong for me, it will”; “I hardly ever expect things to go my way”; “I rarely count on good things happening to me”) were reverse scored and averaged with positively worded items (e.g., “In uncertain times, I usually expect the best”; “I’m always optimistic about my future”; “Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad”). As items on the scale are “extremely” worded (e.g., “always”;

“rarely”), participants who strongly agree with these items are reporting a vision of their future in which good things will happen and few if any problems will arise. Internal consistency for this measure was adequate for both husbands (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .78$) and wives (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .84$).

Situational, relationship-specific optimism. A 20-item questionnaire was created to assess optimistic expectations specific to relationship events. This scale was heavily based on measures of positive expectancies for relationships used in prior research (McNulty & Karney, 2004; Murraro & Holmes, 1997) and included eight items used in prior work comparing the differential effects of global and relationship-specific optimism (Neff & Geers, 2013). At the initial study assessment, spouses were asked to consider the next four years of their marriage and rate their agreement with items such as “I expect my partner and I will always communicate well”, “I expect my partner will always be responsive to my needs”, and “I expect my partner will rarely disappoint me/let me down/break a promise” on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Similar to the measure of global optimism, items on the scale were extremely worded to capture variability in optimism for future relationship events. Thus, participants who strongly agree with these items are reporting a vision of their marriage in which good things will happen and few if any problems will arise. A composite score was created by averaging item responses; therefore, higher scores indicate greater levels of relationship-specific optimism. Internal consistency of this measure was .92 for both spouses.

Self-esteem. To assess self-esteem, spouses completed the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Questionnaire (Rosenberg, 1965). Average scores on this 10-item measure can range from 1 to 4, with higher scores indicating higher self-esteem. The internal consistency was high for both spouses (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .81$ for husbands and .86 for wives).

Neuroticism. To assess neuroticism, spouses completed the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1978). This 23-item questionnaire asks spouses to answer yes or no questions about their negative affectivity. Composite scores could range from 0 to 23, with higher scores indicating higher neuroticism. The internal consistency of the measure was high for both husbands (Cronbach's $\alpha = .83$) and for wives (Cronbach's $\alpha = .80$).

General marital satisfaction. To adjust for general relationship quality, spouses completed a slightly adapted version of the 16-item Couples Satisfaction Index (Funk & Rogge, 2007) as part of the background questionnaire. Spouses rated items such as "Our marriage is strong" on a seven-point scale (0 = "not at all true" and 6 = "completely true"). One item, however, was assessed on a six-point scale ("In general, how often do you think things between you and your partner are going well?"). Composite scores could range from 0-95, with higher scores indicating greater marital satisfaction ($\alpha=.95$ for husbands; $\alpha=.94$ for wives).

Daily Diary Measures

Daily positive and negative emotions. Each day of the diary tasks, spouses were asked to consider the extent to which they experienced six positive emotions (i.e., satisfied, excited, elated, happy, relaxed, calm) and nine negative emotions (i.e., nervous, anxious, tense, frustrated, angry, irritated, depressed, discouraged, sad) on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*). An average score on each emotion dimension was created for each spouse on each day, with higher scores indicating higher levels of either positive or negative emotions.

Daily marital conflict. The daily diary presented spouses with a checklist of relationship behaviors and asked them to indicate whether any of the behaviors had occurred that day (1 = yes, 0 = no). As part of this checklist, spouses reported whether or not their partner had enacted any of five negative behaviors toward them that day (e.g., "spouse showed anger or impatience

toward you,” “spouse criticized you”). The number of negative partner behaviors reported was summed for each spouse on each diary day.² Thus, scores could range from 0 to 5, with higher scores indicating greater levels of daily marital conflict.

Data Analyses

Multilevel modeling analyses were conducted using Hierarchical Linear Modeling (Raudenbush, Bryk, & Congdon, 2013). Interdependence within couples was accounted for using procedures described by Laurenceau and Bolger (2005) for analyzing dyadic diary data. Specifically, husbands’ and wives’ effects were estimated simultaneously for all analyses and dummy variables were used to nest husband and wife data within each couple. This approach allows for straightforward tests of gender differences in coefficients of interest (a 1-*df* χ^2 test). In cases where no significant gender differences were found, coefficients were then constrained to be equal for husbands and wives (see Barnett, Marshall, Raudenbush, & Brennan, 1993), and results are presented pooled across gender. The significance test of such a constrained coefficient is more powerful than tests for gender-specific coefficients.

Results

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Means and standard deviations for all variables are presented in Table 1. The newlywed couples in this sample were generally satisfied in their marriage and reported rather optimistic views of their future. In fact, approximately 85% of spouses scored above the midpoint on the measure of global optimism and approximately 96% of spouses scored above the midpoint on the

² As seen in the Supplementary Materials, this checklist also asked spouses whether they had enacted any negative behaviors toward their partner that day (e.g., “I criticized my partner”) and included several positive marital behaviors that spouses could endorse each day (e.g., “spouse said something that made you feel loved”). We utilized only spouses’ reports of negative behaviors received from their partner in this study, as our theoretical focus was on situations in which the partner behaves in a way that poses a ‘challenge’ or a ‘threat’ to the relationship.

measure of relationship-specific optimism. Thus, these couples ranged from moderately optimistic to highly optimistic about their future. With regard to daily marital conflict, wives reported experiencing conflict with their partner on 21% of days and husbands experiencing conflict with their partner on 25% of days.

Table 2 presents the within-spouse and between-spouse correlations for all variables of interest. Examination of the within-spouse correlations revealed several significant results. As expected, spouses who reported higher levels of global optimism also reported higher levels of self-esteem and lower levels of neuroticism. Global optimism was significantly positively associated with marital satisfaction for husbands, but not for wives. Similarly, spouses who reported greater levels of relationship-specific optimism also were more satisfied in their marriage and reported higher levels of self-esteem. In addition, wives (but not husbands) who reported greater levels of relationship-specific optimism also reported lower levels of neuroticism. These correlations highlight the importance of controlling for marital satisfaction, self-esteem, and neuroticism when examining the unique effects of global and relationship-specific optimism.

Further, global optimism was not significantly correlated with daily marital conflict for husbands or wives. However, relationship-specific optimism was significantly and negatively associated with marital conflict for husbands and wives, suggesting that spouses who reported greater levels of relationship-specific optimism reported lower levels of marital conflict. For both husbands and wives, average daily positive emotion was significantly and positively associated with relationship-specific optimism, self-esteem, and marital satisfaction and negatively associated with neuroticism. Average daily negative emotion was significantly and negatively

associated with global optimism, relationship-specific optimism, and self-esteem for both husbands and wives, and was positively associated with neuroticism.

In the broader optimism literature, global and specific forms of optimism are usually not significantly correlated or are only weakly correlated (e.g., Klein & Zajac, 2009). Thus, the significant but small correlations between global and relationship-specific optimism reported in the current sample are consistent with past research. To further illuminate the association between these two variables, Figures 1a and 1b present the scatterplot of this correlation for husbands and wives respectively, with the mean of each form of optimism represented by the horizontal and vertical line within the plot. As seen in the figures, spouses are fairly equally distributed across the four quadrants, indicating that all combinations of scores on the optimism variables (e.g., higher global optimism, lower relationship-specific optimism, etc.) are represented in the sample.

Optimistic Expectations and Reactivity to Daily Marital Conflict

The first goal of the study was to examine whether global and specific optimistic expectations may differentially predict emotional reactivity to daily marital conflicts. To examine this, the within-person association between daily marital conflicts and same-day positive and negative emotions were modeled according to the following equation:

$$\text{Level 1: Daily emotion level} = \beta_0(\text{Wives}) + \beta_1(\text{Husbands}) + \beta_2(\text{Wives' Diary Day}) \\ + \beta_3(\text{Husbands' Diary Day}) + \beta_4(\text{Wives' Diary Phase}) + \beta_5(\text{Husbands' Diary Phase}) \\ + \beta_6(\text{Wives' Daily Reported Marital Conflict}) + \beta_7(\text{Husbands' Daily Reported Marital Conflict}) + \text{error}$$

$$\text{Level 2: } \beta_0 = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(\text{Wives' Average Reported Marital Conflict}) + \gamma_{02}(\text{Wives' Global Optimism}) \\ + \gamma_{03}(\text{Wives' Relationship-Specific Optimism}) + r_0 \\ \beta_1 = \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11}(\text{Husbands' Average Reported Marital Conflict}) + \gamma_{12}(\text{Husbands' Global Optimism}) \\ + \gamma_{13}(\text{Husbands' Relationship-Specific Optimism}) + r_1 \\ \beta_2 \text{ thru } \beta_5 = \gamma_{20-50} + r_{2-5} \\ \beta_6 = \gamma_{60} + \gamma_{61}(\text{Wives' Global Optimism}) + \gamma_{62}(\text{Wives' Relationship-Specific Optimism}) + r_6$$

$$\beta_7 = \gamma_{70} + \gamma_{71}(\text{Husbands' Global Optimism}) + \gamma_{72}(\text{Husbands' Relationship-Specific Optimism}) + r_7$$

[Model 1]

In this model, daily reported marital conflict was centered within persons for each spouse. Diary day was included in the model to adjust for the possibility that factors such as habituation can influence how spouses complete diary materials over time (Bolger, Davis, & Rafaeli, 2003) and phase was included in the model to adjust for the possibility that spouses' emotions may linearly increase or decrease as the study progresses. Average reported marital conflict across all diary days, global optimism, and relationship-specific optimism were standardized prior to conducting the analyses. Average reported conflict was included at the between-subjects level of the analysis (i.e., Level 2) in order to fully disentangle the within-person and between-person effects of marital conflict on daily emotions (Bolger & Laurenceau, 2013; Curran & Bauer, 2011). Adjusting for spouses' mean levels of marital conflict allowed us to examine the effect of daily conflict on a spouse's daily emotion level while taking into account the fact that some spouses generally reported greater levels of marital conflict than did others. The between-person equations for each coefficient included a random effect. The effects of daily conflict on positive and negative emotions were examined in separate analyses.

We hypothesized that on days of greater marital conflict, spouses would report lower levels of positive emotions on average. However, each form of optimism was expected to differentially moderate this association, such that this association would be weaker for spouses higher in global optimism and stronger for spouses higher in relationship-specific optimism. Similarly, it was expected that on days of greater marital conflict, spouses would report higher levels of negative emotions relative to lower conflict days. Although global optimism was not expected to moderate this association, the association was expected to be stronger for those

spouses reporting higher levels of relationship-specific optimism. Contrary to predictions, at the within-person level, neither form of optimism moderated the link between daily emotions and daily marital conflict (see Tables 3 and 4).³

Additional analyses were then conducted to explore the potential moderating role of each form of optimism at the between-subjects level. We modified the above equation to include both the interaction between global optimism and average marital conflict across all diary days, and the interaction between relationship-specific optimism and average marital conflict across all diary days⁴. We explored whether this interaction may be associated with positive and negative emotion in separate analyses.

As seen in Table 5, the moderating effects of optimism were not significant when examining positive emotions. However, results did indicate that the association between negative emotion and average marital conflict across the diary days was moderated by global optimism ($B = -0.07$, $SE = 0.02$, $t = -2.82$, $p = 0.005$; see Table 6), though not by relationship-specific optimism ($B = 0.03$, $SE = 0.03$, $t = 1.22$, $p = 0.23$). Notably, this interaction remained significant when adjusting for marital satisfaction, self-esteem, and neuroticism ($B = -0.05$, $SE = 0.02$, $t = -2.27$, $p = .03$; see Table 7).

The interaction of average marital conflict and global optimism was examined more closely with comparisons made at ± 1 *SD* from the mean (Aiken & West, 1991). As shown in Figure 2, simple slope analyses revealed that spouses lower in global optimism were highly reactive to the presence of marital conflict, such that these spouses reported significantly higher

³ Supplementary analyses were conducted to explore the potential three-way interaction between global optimism, relationship-specific optimism, and daily marital conflict on positive ($B = 0.01$, $SE = 0.03$, $t = 0.25$, $p = 0.81$) and negative emotions ($B = 0.00$, $SE = 0.02$, $t = 0.02$, $p = 0.98$). Neither interaction was significant.

⁴ We also explored the three-way interaction between global optimism, relationship-specific optimism, and average marital conflict on positive emotion ($B = -0.00$, $SE = 0.01$, $t = -0.42$, $p = 0.68$) and negative emotion ($B = -0.00$, $SE = 0.01$, $t = -0.34$, $p = 0.74$). These interactions were not significant.

levels of negative emotion as marital conflict increased ($B = 0.25$, $SE = 0.04$, $t = 6.36$, $p < .001$). Although a similar pattern emerged for spouses higher in global optimism, ($B = 0.12$, $SE = 0.03$, $t = 3.98$, $p < .001$), the association between negative emotions and average marital conflict for these spouses appeared to be weaker. Indeed, at higher levels of marital conflict, spouses who were lower in global optimism reported more negative emotion compared to spouses higher in global optimism ($B = -0.18$, $SE = 0.04$, $t = -4.66$, $p < .001$). In other words, global optimism did seem to buffer the effects of marital conflict on negative emotions at the between-subject level. Overall, however, the pattern of results was largely inconsistent with the notion that global and relationship-specific forms of optimism differentially moderate emotional reactivity to marital conflicts.

Optimistic Expectations and Recovery from Daily Marital Conflict

The second goal of the study was to examine whether global and specific optimistic expectations may differentially predict emotional recovery from daily marital conflicts. To examine this, the within-person association between previous day daily marital conflicts and positive and negative emotions were modeled according to the following equation:

$$\text{Level 1: Daily emotion level} = \beta_0(\text{Wives}) + \beta_1(\text{Husbands}) + \beta_2(\text{Wives' Diary Day}) + \beta_3(\text{Husbands' Diary Day}) + \beta_4(\text{Wives' Diary Phase}) + \beta_5(\text{Husbands' Diary Phase}) + \beta_6(\text{Wives' Previous Day Reported Marital Conflict}) + \beta_7(\text{Husbands' Previous Day Reported Marital Conflict}) + \text{error}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Level 2: } \beta_0 &= \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(\text{Wives' Average Reported Marital Conflict}) + \gamma_{02}(\text{Wives' Global Optimism}) + \gamma_{03}(\text{Wives' Relationship-Specific Optimism}) + r_0 \\ \beta_1 &= \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11}(\text{Husbands' Average Reported Marital Conflict}) + \gamma_{12}(\text{Husbands' Global Optimism}) + \gamma_{13}(\text{Husbands' Relationship-Specific Optimism}) + r_1 \\ \beta_2 \text{ thru } \beta_5 &= \gamma_{20-50} + r_{2-5} \\ \beta_6 &= \gamma_{60} + \gamma_{61}(\text{Wives' Global Optimism}) + \gamma_{62}(\text{Wives' Relationship-Specific Optimism}) + r_6 \\ \beta_7 &= \gamma_{70} + \gamma_{71}(\text{Husbands' Global Optimism}) + \gamma_{72}(\text{Husbands' Relationship-Specific Optimism}) + r_7 \end{aligned}$$

In this model, previous day reported marital conflict was centered within persons for each spouse. Again, average reported marital conflict across all diary days, global optimism, and relationship-specific optimism were standardized. The between-person equations for each coefficient include a random effect. The effects of previous day daily conflict on positive and negative emotions were examined in separate analyses.

We hypothesized that on days following greater marital conflict, spouses would report greater levels of positive emotions on average (Bolger, DeLongis Kessler, & Schilling, 1989). However, each form of optimism was predicted to differentially moderate this association, such that this association would be stronger for spouses higher in global optimism and weaker for spouses lower in relationship-specific optimism. Additionally, we hypothesized that on days following greater marital conflict, spouses would report lower levels of negative emotions on average, but that each form of optimism would differentially moderate this association. It was predicted that this association would be stronger for spouses higher in global optimism and weaker for spouses higher in relationship-specific optimism. Contrary to predictions, neither form of optimism moderated the link between daily emotions and previous day marital conflict (see Tables 8 and 9)⁵.

⁵Supplementary analyses were conducted to explore the potential three-way interaction between global optimism, relationship-specific optimism, and previous day marital conflict on positive ($B = -0.00$, $SE = 0.03$, $t = -0.02$, $p = 0.98$) and negative emotions ($B = -0.00$, $SE = 0.02$, $t = -0.17$, $p = 0.86$). These interactions were not significant.

Discussion

Previous work across a variety of domains has suggested that global optimism may promote adaptive behaviors when faced with difficulties (see Carver, Scheier, & Segerstrom, 2010, for review), while domain-specific optimism may hinder proactive responses when a threat occurs (e.g., Klein & Zajac, 2009). Similarly, research examining the effects of these two forms of optimism within marriage has found that global optimism may help to promote adaptive relationship functioning (e.g., Assad, Donnellan, & Conger, 2007; Srivastava, et al., 2006; Neff & Geers, 2013), while relationship-specific optimism may hinder partners' abilities to engage in relationship enhancing behaviors (Neff & Geers, 2013). To explain these divergent outcomes, researchers have argued that the effects of optimism may depend on the specificity of the optimistic expectation. Because global expectations are more abstract, they are more difficult to disconfirm; thus, individuals higher in global optimism are more likely to view difficulties as challenges rather than threats, making these individuals more resilient to life stressors. Conversely, as expectations become more specific, they also become easier to disconfirm. Thus, individuals with greater levels of relationship-specific optimism tend to experience higher levels of distress in the face of threatening information. As a result, these individuals tend to respond to difficulties with avoidant coping strategies, which can leave the problem unsolved. Most prior work on global and relationship-specific optimism within the marital literature, however, has focused on the link between these two forms of optimism and behavioral coping. Thus, the aim of the current study was to explore whether global and relationship-specific optimism may also be related to differing emotional responses to daily marital conflict.

We expected that global and relationship-specific optimism would differentially predict both spouses' emotional reactivity to and emotional recovery from daily marital conflict. More

specifically, we believed that global optimism would enhance emotional reactivity to and recovery from daily conflicts, while relationship-specific optimism was predicted to hinder adaptive emotion regulation in the face of conflict. Contrary to our predictions, neither form of optimism moderated the association between daily conflict (same day or previous day) and daily emotions (positive or negative).

However, although no significant interactions emerged at the within-subject level, one interaction did emerge at the between-subjects level, such that global optimism moderated the association between negative emotion and average marital conflict across all diary days. Consistent with the idea that global optimism may enhance emotional resiliency in the face of threats, results indicated that among spouses reporting more marital conflict on average, those spouses holding more optimistic global expectations for the future experienced lower levels of negative emotion. Notably, we expected that beneficial effects of global optimism may be stronger when examining positive emotions, rather than negative emotions. That is, some researchers have argued that individuals with greater levels of global optimism are not immune to experiencing the negative emotions that accompany stressful circumstances, but rather are better able to maintain positive emotions during difficult times (Carver et al., 2010; Tugade & Frederickson, 2004). However, our results suggest that spouses with higher levels of global optimism, compared to spouses lower in global optimism, may in fact be shielded from experiencing greater levels of negative emotions when marital conflict occurs. This buffering effect for negative emotions is consistent with some prior work. For instance, the results of a study of 45 women with rheumatoid arthritis revealed that the link between daily pain and daily negative affect was stronger for women with lower levels of global optimism; in fact, this association was not significant for women with higher levels of global optimism (Kwissa-

Gakewska & Gruszczyńska, 2018). Thus, although prior work suggests that individuals with higher levels of global optimism may not be completely immune to experiencing negative emotions in the face of a threat (e.g., daily pain, daily marital conflict), it seems that they may experience fewer negative emotions than those individuals with lower levels of global optimism.

Nonetheless, overall we found minimal evidence for the notion that global and relationship-specific optimism may differentially influence emotional reactivity to and recovery from daily marital conflict. The failure to find robust support for the moderating role of global optimism stands in contrast to decades of prior work and was particularly surprising. There is a wealth of evidence suggesting that individuals with higher levels of global optimism may be able to reframe threats into challenges (e.g., Chang, 1998), thus helping these individuals emotionally adjust (Carver, et al., 2010; Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 2001) and maintain greater levels of positivity following a negative event (Carver et al., 2010; Larson et al, 2003; Tugade & Frederickson, 2004). Based on this prior work, we expected that spouses higher in global optimism would respond to marital conflict (i.e., a threat) by maintaining a higher level of positivity both on the day of and the day following high levels of marital conflict. However, we did not find any evidence for these predictions. Because of the strength and vastness of the prior work on global optimism in the field, our results are difficult to untangle and explain.

We also did not find any evidence that relationship-specific optimism moderates the link between daily marital conflict and emotional reactivity and/or the link between daily marital conflict and emotional recovery. Though unexpected, as there are fewer studies examining the role of relationship-specific optimism for marital well-being, these results are not as surprising. Even though previous research has found evidence that relationship-specific optimism may adversely impact the coping mechanisms of spouses in the face of marital issues (Neff & Geers,

2013), this work was conducted with a relatively small sample of 61 couples. Given that the current study relied on a much larger sample, it is possible that results obtained from the prior smaller sample are not robust. Moreover, in the current study it is worth noting that relationship-specific optimism was significantly and negatively correlated with spouses' own reports of daily marital conflict (see Table 2). However, further analyses indicated that spouses' relationship-specific optimism was not significantly correlated with their partners' reports of daily marital conflict ($r = -0.14, p = 0.08$ for husbands and $r = -0.12, p = 0.13$ for wives). Together, this pattern of correlations suggests that spouses higher in relationship-specific optimism may be less likely to perceive conflict in the first place; in other words, rather than influencing reactivity to conflict, relationship-specific optimism may exert its influence by altering spouses' recognition of conflict and difficulties in the relationship. Of course, although overlooking conflict may feel better in the short-term, over time this conflict avoidance can allow problems to fester (e.g., Birditt, et al., 2015). Future researchers may consider examining the degree of accuracy and bias in spouses' perceptions of their partners' negative behavior, and whether this accuracy and bias may be differentially moderated by global and relationship-specific optimism.

Strengths and Limitations of Current Study

The current study had a few key strengths. First, this study utilized a larger sample than previous work examining global and relationship-specific optimism, thus increasing power to detect effects. A second strength of this study was the use of an intensive, repeated measures methodological design. The current study assessed spouses' positive emotions, negative emotions, and marital conflict using up to 42 days of diary data collected over the first three years of marriage. This design may have reduced the likelihood of retrospective bias and may have increased spouses' accuracy in reporting relationship experiences. More specifically, when

partners are asked to reflect on relationship behaviors that occurred over a longer period of time (e.g., over the past month), their responses can be more strongly influenced by their current mood or relationship satisfaction, a process referred to as sentiment override (Weiss, 1980). Thus, a design that asks partners to reflect on their relationship experiences on a daily basis—as done in the current study—increases the likelihood that their reports will be accurate.

However, the current study is not without limitations. These data were collected from a sample of generally happy newlywed couples that reported relatively high levels of optimism and relatively low levels of daily marital conflict. Stronger effects may be found by examining couples that have progressed beyond the “newlywed phase” of their marriage in future studies. It is possible that variability in optimism—particularly relationship-specific optimism—might increase over time. By utilizing a sample of couples followed over a longer amount of time, therefore, variability in optimism could increase. As a result, the moderating role of optimism may be detected. Additionally, the sample utilized in the current study was mostly comprised of White, well-educated, middle class couples. Therefore, future research should focus on examining these hypotheses in more diverse samples.

Conclusion

Previous research has established that global and relationship-specific optimism are differentially associated with spouses' behavioral coping strategies in the face of marital conflict. However, no work has addressed whether these two forms of optimism may also differentially influence emotional responses to daily marital conflict. Contrary to our predictions, the current findings provided minimal evidence that global and relationship-specific optimism influence spouses' emotional reactivity to and recovery from marital conflict. Nonetheless, given prior research documenting the differing effects of each form of optimism, further work may want to continue exploring other ways in which optimism may influence relationship processes

Tables

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Husbands				Wives			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max
Global Optimism	2.89	0.63	0.33	4.00	2.80	0.74	0.33	4.00
Relationship-specific optimism	5.57	0.78	3.11	7.00	5.35	0.93	1.63	6.89
Neuroticism	6.47	4.60	0.00	21.00	10.16	4.63	0.00	23.00
Self-esteem	3.45	0.43	2.20	4.00	3.38	0.50	1.30	4.00
Marital Satisfaction	83.27	10.45	35.00	95.00	84.87	9.37	43.00	95.00
Average daily marital conflict	0.55	0.52	0.00	2.68	0.44	0.41	0.00	2.31
Average daily positive emotion	3.01	0.56	1.76	4.73	2.89	0.53	1.82	4.48
Average daily negative emotion	1.73	0.47	1.02	3.19	1.81	0.48	1.00	4.00

Note. Global optimism could range from 0 to 4, and relationship-specific optimism could range from 1 to 7. Self-esteem could range from 1 to 4, neuroticism could range from 0 to 23, marital satisfaction could range from 0 to 95. Average daily marital conflict could range from 0 to 5 and average daily positive and negative emotion could range from 1 to 5.

Table 2
Within-Spouse and Between-Spouse Correlations

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Global Optimism	0.20*	0.21**	-0.43***	0.62***	0.14 ⁺	0.00	0.25**	0.35***
2. Relationship-specific optimism	0.17*	0.29***	-0.27***	0.22**	0.49***	-0.21**	0.34***	-0.15*
3. Neuroticism	-0.36***	-0.14 ⁺	0.08	-0.50***	-0.33***	0.24**	-0.38***	0.38***
4. Self-esteem	0.52***	0.18*	-0.50***	0.17*	0.27***	-0.11	0.28***	-0.36***
5. Marital Satisfaction	0.35***	0.46***	-0.30***	0.31***	0.40***	-0.21**	0.29***	-0.10
6. Average daily marital conflict	-0.10	-0.39***	0.08	-0.14 ⁺	-0.22**	0.51***	-0.18*	0.43***
7. Average daily positive emotion	0.14 ⁺	0.23**	-0.31***	0.27**	0.23**	-0.08	0.17*	-0.26**
8. Average daily negative emotion	0.19*	-0.27**	0.41***	-0.26**	-0.33***	0.45***	-0.31***	0.22**

Note. Husbands' correlations are below the diagonal, and wives' correlations are above. The diagonal (in bold) contains between-spouse correlations. ⁺ $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 3

The Moderating Effects of Global Optimism and Relationship-specific Optimism on the Association Between Daily Marital Conflict and Positive Emotion

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	95% CI	
				<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Average daily positive emotion (Intercept)	3.06	0.03			
Global optimism	0.06	0.03	2.35*	0.01	0.11
Relationship-specific optimism	0.13	0.03	3.93***	0.07	0.20
Average marital conflict	-0.01	0.03	-0.31	-0.08	0.06
Diary day	-0.01	0.00	-5.49***	-0.02	-0.01
Diary phase	-0.05	0.02	-2.81**	-0.08	-0.01
Daily marital conflict	-0.14	0.01	-15.78***	-0.16	-0.12
Global optimism X daily marital conflict	0.00	0.00	0.10	-0.01	0.02
Relationship-specific optimism X daily marital conflict	-0.01	0.01	-0.73	-0.02	0.01

Note. All coefficients presented are pooled across gender. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Table 4

The Moderating Effects of Global Optimism and Relationship-specific Optimism on the Association Between Daily Marital Conflict and Negative Emotion

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	95% CI	
				<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Average daily negative emotion (Intercept)	1.80	0.03			
Global optimism	-0.11	0.03	-3.96***	-0.17	-0.06
Relationship-specific optimism	-0.02	0.02	-0.98	-0.06	0.02
Average marital conflict	0.18	0.03	7.21***	0.13	0.23
Diary day	-0.01	0.00	-7.24***	-0.02	-0.01
Diary phase	0.06	0.02	3.80***	0.03	0.09
Daily marital conflict	0.22	0.01	21.99***	0.20	0.24
Global optimism X daily marital conflict	0.00	0.00	0.44	-0.01	0.02
Relationship-specific optimism X daily marital conflict	0.00	0.00	0.10	-0.01	0.02

Note. All coefficients presented are pooled across gender. *** $p < .001$. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Table 5

The Moderating Effects of Global Optimism and Relationship-specific Optimism on the Association Between Average Marital Conflict and Positive Emotion

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	95% CI	
				<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Average daily positive emotion (Intercept)	3.06	0.03			
Global optimism	0.06	0.03	2.09*	0.01	0.11
Relationship-specific optimism	0.13	0.03	4.42***	0.06	0.19
Average marital conflict	-0.01	0.03	-0.46	-0.09	0.06
Global optimism X average marital conflict	-0.02	0.03	-0.58	-0.08	0.05
Relationship-specific optimism X average marital conflict	-0.01	0.03	-0.22	-0.06	0.05
Diary day	-0.01	0.00	-5.48***	-0.02	-0.01
Diary phase	-0.05	0.02	-2.78**	-0.08	-0.01
Daily marital conflict	-0.14	0.01	-16.16***	-0.16	-0.12
Global optimism X daily marital conflict	0.00	0.01	0.14	-0.01	0.02
Relationship-specific optimism X daily marital conflict	-0.01	0.01	-0.69	-0.02	0.01

Note. All coefficients presented are pooled across gender. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Table 6

The Moderating Effects of Global Optimism and Relationship-specific Optimism on the Association Between Average Marital Conflict and Negative Emotion

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	95% CI	
				<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Average daily negative emotion (Intercept)	1.81	0.03			
Global optimism	-0.12	0.03	-4.65***	-0.17	-0.07
Relationship-specific optimism	-0.02	0.02	-1.09	-0.07	0.02
Average marital conflict	0.20	0.03	6.59***	0.14	0.25
Global optimism X average marital conflict	-0.07	0.02	-2.82**	-0.12	-0.02
Relationship-specific optimism X average marital conflict	0.03	0.03	1.22	-0.02	0.08
Diary day	-0.01	0.00	-7.24***	-0.02	-0.01
Diary phase	0.06	0.02	3.76***	0.03	0.09
Daily marital conflict	0.22	0.01	22.01***	0.20	0.24
Global optimism X daily marital conflict	0.00	0.01	0.41	-0.01	0.02
Relationship-specific optimism X daily marital conflict	0.00	0.01	0.07	-0.01	0.02

Note. All coefficients presented are pooled across gender. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Table 7

The Moderating Effects of Global Optimism and Relationship-specific Optimism on the Association Between Average Marital Conflict and Negative Emotion Including Covariates

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	95% CI	
				<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Average daily negative emotion (Intercept)	1.81	0.03			
Marital satisfaction	-0.01	0.02	-0.25	-0.05	0.04
Self-esteem	-0.03	0.03	-1.05	-0.09	0.03
Neuroticism	0.13	0.03	4.54***	0.07	0.18
Global optimism	-0.05	0.02	-2.21*	-0.10	-0.01
Relationship-specific optimism	-0.00	0.02	-0.22	-0.05	0.04
Average marital conflict	0.17	0.03	5.72***	0.11	0.23
Global optimism X average marital conflict	-0.05	0.02	-2.27*	-0.10	-0.01
Relationship-specific optimism X average marital conflict	0.03	0.02	1.41	-0.01	0.08
Diary day	-0.01	0.00	-7.28***	-0.02	-0.01
Diary phase	0.06	0.02	3.69***	0.03	0.09
Daily marital conflict	0.22	0.01	22.18***	0.20	0.24
Global optimism X daily marital conflict	0.00	0.01	0.45	-0.01	0.02
Relationship-specific optimism X daily marital conflict	0.00	0.01	0.16	-0.01	0.02

Note. All coefficients presented are pooled across gender. * $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Table 8

The Moderating Effects of Global Optimism and Relationship-specific Optimism on the Association Between Previous Day Marital Conflict and Positive Emotion

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	95% CI	
				<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Average daily positive emotion (Intercept)	3.00	0.03			
Global optimism	0.07	0.03	2.43*	0.01	0.12
Relationship-specific optimism	0.14	0.04	3.81***	0.07	0.21
Average marital conflict	-0.02	0.04	-0.65	-0.09	0.05
Diary day	-0.01	0.00	-2.84**	-0.01	-0.00
Diary phase	-0.04	0.02	-2.44*	-0.08	-0.01
Previous day marital conflict	-0.00	0.01	-0.45	-0.02	0.01
Global optimism X previous day marital conflict	-0.00	0.01	-0.01	-0.02	0.02
Relationship-specific optimism X previous day marital conflict	-0.00	0.01	-0.13	-0.01	0.01

Note. All coefficients presented are pooled across gender. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Table 9

The Moderating Effects of Global Optimism and Relationship-specific Optimism on the Association Between Previous Day Marital Conflict and Negative Emotion

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	95% CI	
				<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Average daily negative emotion (Intercept)	1.80	0.03			
Global optimism	-0.11	0.03	-4.10***	-0.16	-0.06
Relationship-specific optimism	-0.02	0.02	-0.92	-0.06	0.02
Average marital conflict	0.19	0.03	7.56***	0.14	0.24
Diary day	-0.01	0.00	-5.51***	-0.02	-0.01
Diary phase	0.05	0.02	3.04**	0.02	0.09
Previous day marital conflict	0.02	0.01	1.99*	0.00	0.03
Global optimism X previous day marital conflict	0.00	0.01	0.18	-0.02	0.02
Relationship-specific optimism X previous day marital conflict	0.00	0.01	0.37	-0.01	0.02

Note. All coefficients presented are pooled across gender. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Figures

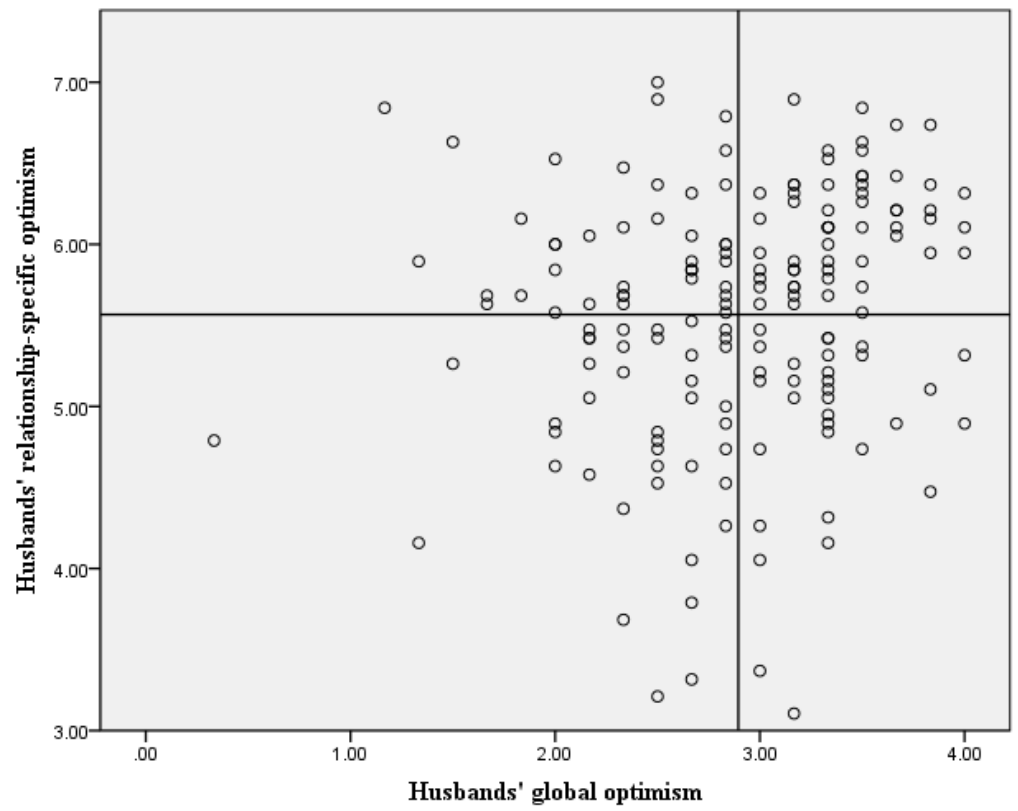


Figure 1a. Scatterplot of husbands' relationship-specific optimism as a function of husbands' global optimism.

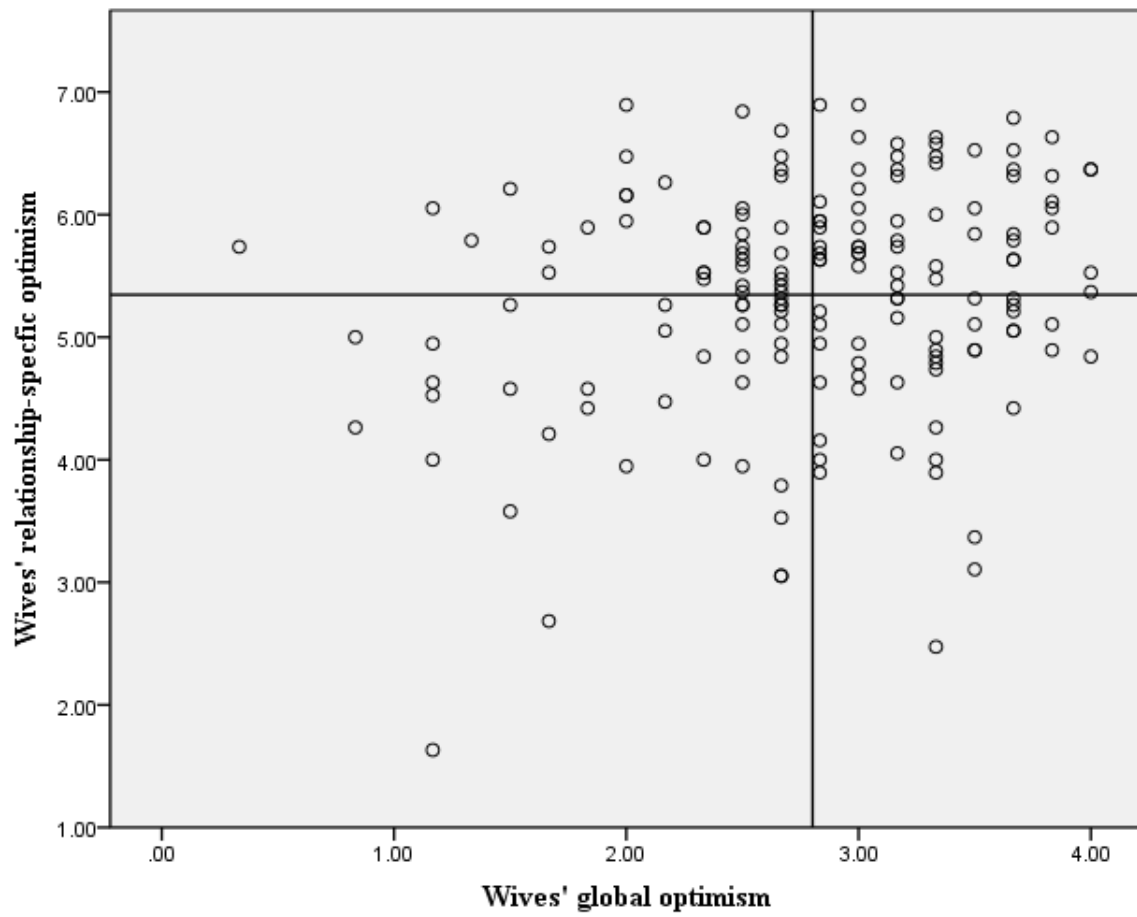


Figure 1b. Scatterplot of wives' relationship-specific optimism as a function of wives' global optimism.

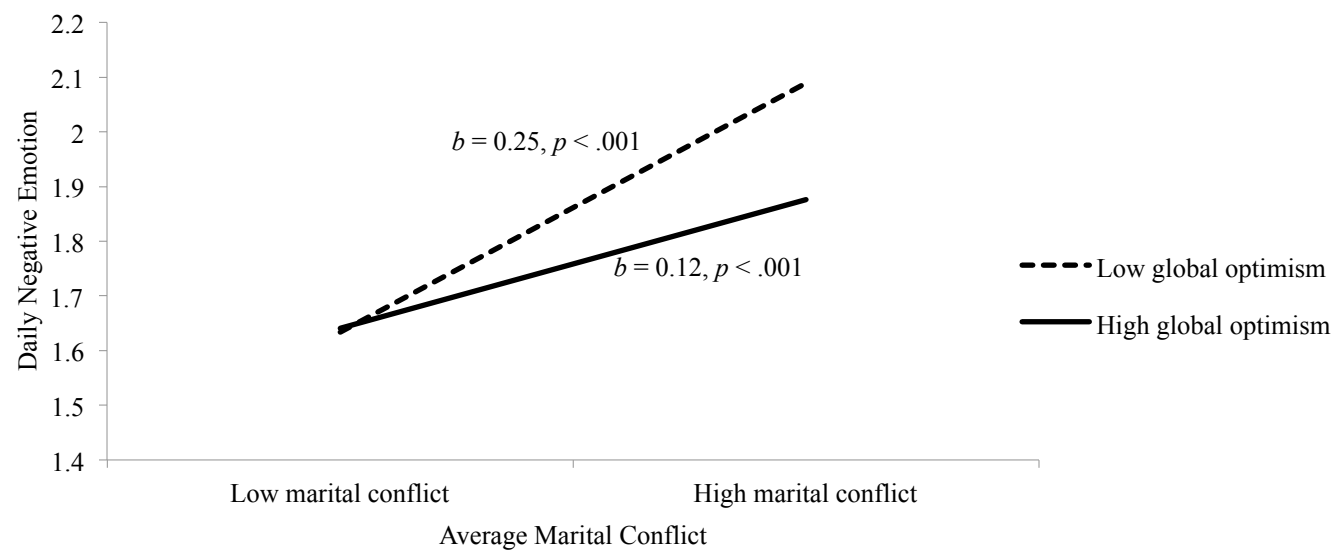


Figure 2. The interaction of global optimism and average marital conflict predicting spouses' daily negative mood.

Appendices

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A.1. List of items included in *Global Optimism Measure*.

1. In uncertain times, I usually expect the best.
2. It's easy for me to relax. (Filler)
3. If something can go wrong for me, it will.
4. I'm always optimistic about my future.
5. I enjoy my friends a lot. (Filler)
6. It's important for me to keep busy. (Filler)
7. I hardly ever expect things to go my way.
8. I don't get upset too easily. (Filler)
9. I rarely count on good things happening to me.
10. Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad.

APPENDIX A.2. List of items included in *Situational, Relationship-specific Optimism* measure.

1. I expect my partner will rarely disappoint me/let me down/break a promise.
2. I expect my partner and I will always communicate well.
3. I expect my partner will always be able to sense and understand my moods.
4. I expect my partner will always be responsive to my needs.
5. I expect my partner will always be interested in how my day went.
6. I expect my partner will rarely show anger or impatience toward me.
7. I expect my partner will always be attractive to me.
8. I expect my sexual relationship with my partner will always be satisfying.
9. I expect my partner and I will always be able to resolve our disagreements.
10. I expect my partner will always listen to or comfort me when needed.
11. I expect my partner will always get along well with my parents.
12. I expect my partner will always be affectionate with me.
13. I expect my partner will never intentionally hurt me.
14. I expect my partner will not be attracted to others/want to be with others.
15. I expect I will not be attracted to others/want to be with others.
16. I expect we will always make time to enjoy leisure activities together.
17. I expect my partner will always provide me with support/help for important things.
18. I expect my partner will rarely criticize me.
19. I expect my partner and I will always agree about children/family issues.
20. I expect my partner will always agree about how to divide household tasks.

APPENDIX A.2. List of items included in *Daily positive and negative emotions* measure.

1. Nervous
2. Satisfied
3. Sad
4. Anxious
5. Excited
6. Tense
7. Elated
8. Frustrated
9. Happy
10. Angry
11. Depressed
12. Relaxed
13. Discouraged
14. Irritated
15. Calm

APPENDIX A.4. Checklist of *Daily Marital Conflict* measure. ⁶

1. You were unable to spend time with spouse

2. Spouse said something that made you feel loved

3. You had an argument with spouse

4. Spouse showed an interest in the events of your day

5. You had to care or look after spouse

6. You enjoyed a leisure activity with spouse

7. Spouse listened to or comforted you

8. Spouse let you down or broke a promise

9. Spouse criticized you

10. Spouse withdrew from a conversation

11. Spouse helped you out with something important

12. Spouse showed anger or impatience toward you

13. You showed an interest in the events of your spouse's day

14. You listened to or comforted spouse

15. You criticized/blamed your spouse

16. You did not express your feelings to avoid conflict

17. You let your spouse down or broke a promise

18. You tried to make your spouse feel loved

19. You helped spouse with something important

20. You showed anger or impatience toward your spouse

⁶ Bolded items were used to create the measure of daily marital conflict used in the study.

APPENDIX A.4, cont'd. Checklist of *Daily Marital Conflict* measure.

21. You had sexual intercourse with your spouse

22. You shared physical intimacy with spouse (other than sexual intercourse)

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